

## BORN to RUN

The Los Angeles  
Marathon winds its  
way through the city,  
with Wesley Korir  
winning in record time.



LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE'S

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The words we use without thought have  
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## Effects of Proposition Failure Coming into Focus

■ Most at Valley College  
likely to be affected by bud-  
get cuts and possible sum-  
mer cancellation.

ROBERT R. KING  
STAFF WRITER

Hours after voters defeated Propositions 1A through E May 19, officials at Valley College and the Los Angeles Community College District began planning how to absorb the huge estimated funding deficiencies from the state.

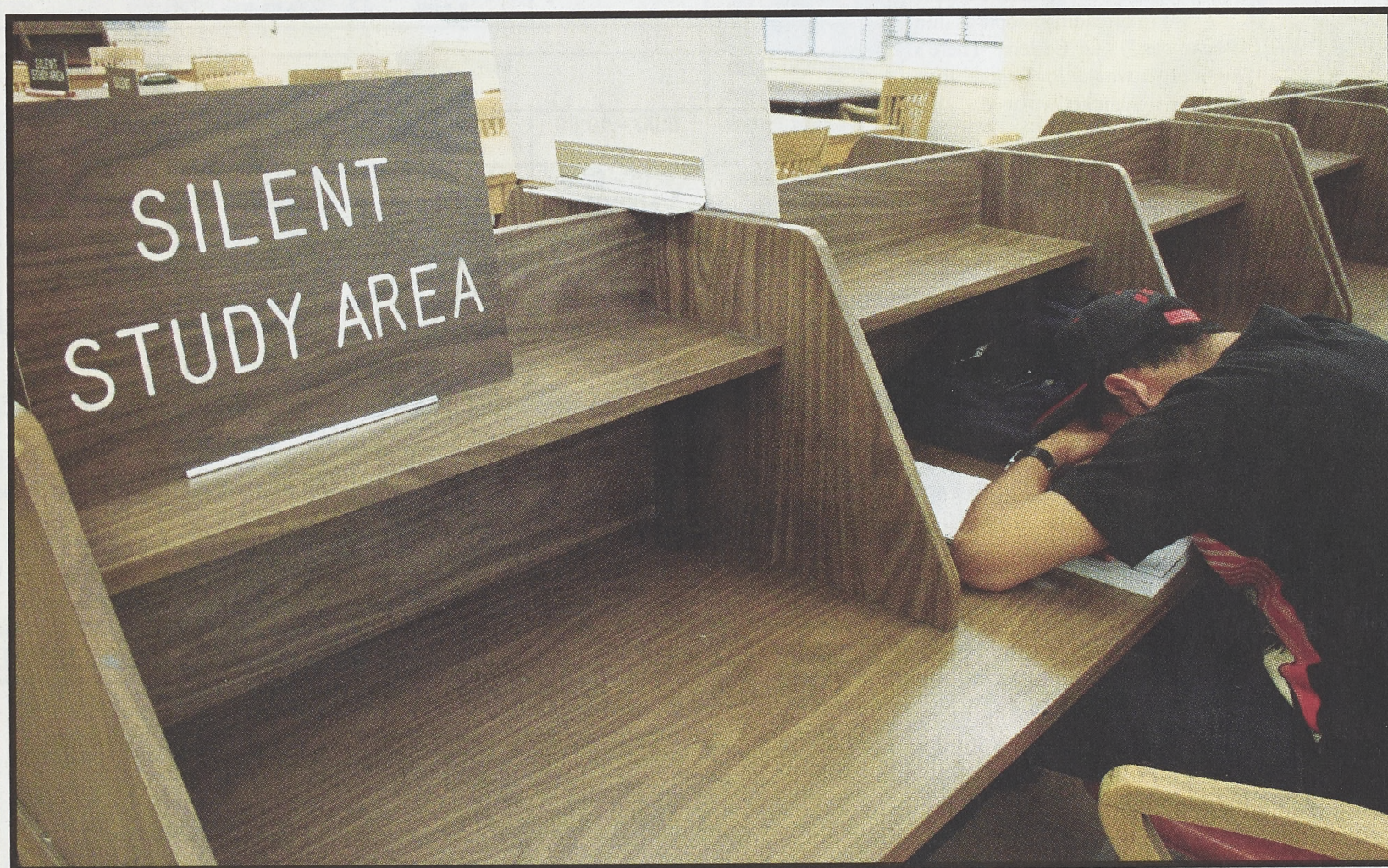
Valley administrators forecast an additional 20 percent budget deficit starting in the fall, and the LACCD Budget Committee discussed possibly canceling the summer term across the district as a result of the Props' failure.

"There's a lot of schizophrenic stuff happening right now," said Valley's Vice President of Academic Affairs Sandra Mayo. "Any cuts we do now will impact the students ... This makes as much sense as eating a worm on television for a prize."

She added that if 20 percent of the existing fall schedule were canceled, it would not equal the overall budget reduction, if estimates are correct. Mayo also said the school must meet state standards for full-time instructors, so the courses that could be cut mostly involve adjunct, or part-time, "freeway flyer" faculty.

Additionally, she summarized that smaller programs, such as theater, may not be able to endure further cuts and slashing larger programs, like mathematics and

see *Budget* page 2



ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL

GRETTEL CORTES / VALLEY STAR

With finals approaching fast, a student finds the next best thing to studying as he catches up on some quality sleep time in the Library silent study area.

## Students Opting Out of Classes

■ Class drop rates are a concern for  
Valley, as budget continues to take a  
downturn.

LUCAS THOMPSON  
STAFF WRITER

Parallel to the ongoing budget and faculty cuts occurring on Valley's campus is a subtle but steadily increasing amount of students cutting classes and often dropping them altogether.

"It makes me sad," said Valley teacher of 25 years, Mauricio Marroquin. "It's a waste of time [and] a waste of money...all the efforts the teachers put into [the students] goes down the drain."

There are many reasons students drop classes, however, Marroquin says that many students have their goals mixed up.

"Their priorities are not correct...they

[often] pay more attention to low paying jobs than school."

The rising number of students dropping classes affects teachers and classrooms equally. The opportunities for dropping classes mid semester are widespread. According to Valley's semester guidelines for the fall 2009 semester, each student has up until Sept. 14 to drop a class without incurring any fees or receiving a withdrawal on their record. After Sept. 25, students are charged a fee for dropping any class. Furthermore, students have until Nov. 20 to drop with a "W," meaning that a student failing a course can drop a class with the much less costly "W" on their transcript.

The lackadaisical attitude of many students on campus are not only expressed by the faculty and administration, but also by their fellow peers.

"I guess they only go for the easy teachers," education major Jazmine Camarene said. "Our

class was full and now [is] empty."

As with any situation, all blame cannot be solely placed on the student, as it is the system which often misplaces students in math and English classes regarding their skill level, according to Marroquin.

"Some students get misplaced...(and) are forced to drop."

Each student is required to take the math and English placement tests in order to evaluate what level each student is at during time of enrollment, but cannot be perfect in placing each student in classes suitable for them.

"Sometimes students drop because they are not academically prepared for the rigor of that particular course," Vice President of Academic Affairs, Sandra Mayo said.

Between the research department and administration here at Valley, there are strides

see *Drop out* page 2

## Student Security a Concern

■ The privacy of student  
records is paramount to  
Valley College administra-  
tors.

H. GORE  
SPORTS EDITOR

A college campus is assumed to be a safe place, an environment that cultivates learning and growing. But students' pursuit of higher education may be putting them at risk just by registering for classes or applying for financial aid.

There are several departments on the Valley College campus that hold private student information such as grades, medical and financial records. Preventive measures have been taken to ensure the safety of the information, but with student workers, career guidance counseling assistants, and administrators having access to personal files, the opportunity for transgressions exist.

"How secure are we? Not as secure as we can be," said Florentino Manzano, dean of enrollment management in admissions and records. "But we do have policies and procedures in place to protect the integrity of the records."

Students are required to show identification at most offices on campus that handle sensitive materials. If a person representing the interests of a student, such as a parent, wants access to the student's information, they must present a written release. This policy has led to many upset parents, with some throwing pencils at admissions staff.

Whether it's mothers and fathers looking for their child's grades, a boyfriend trying to locate his girlfriend, or a person trying to register a class for a friend, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act prohibits the school from releasing information

see *Security* page 2

## Valley Ready for Commencement '09

ASTRID SEIPELT  
MANAGING EDITOR

Green and gold decorations and teddy bears wearing tiny caps and gowns festoon the Valley College Bookstore, while students line up to purchase their graduation regalia, and for a lucky few, their honors cords. With finals less than a week away, Commencement 2009 is just around the corner.

Commencement will take place June 9 in Monarch Stadium at 5 p.m. The event is a source of great pride for the college, including President Sue Carleo.

"Commencement is a very meaningful experience and you have earned the right to be part of it," said Carleo in a letter to graduation candidates.

The letter also says that the ceremony will include inspirational student speakers, music, and the kick off to the 60th anniversary of the College, which will be celebrated this fall.

According to the Graduation Office, 672 petitions for graduation were lodged for the spring, as well as 372 candidates who have already been approved for graduation during the fall. To be approved for graduation, a student must have a minimum of 60 units, have a 2.0 GPA, completed 12 units at Valley and be attending the college when graduation requirements are finished, and complete the courses needed by the college. Graduates will not receive their diplomas at the ceremony; they can pick them up from the Graduation office once their degree is conferred.

"I think it's wonderful, the [Commencement] last year was exciting, very enjoyable," said Marsha Respress of the Graduation Office. "I love it when people come in a get their diplomas...I've been work-



SAMUEL OKSNER / VALLEY STAR

**READY TO WALK** - Students have been purchasing their caps and gowns at the Bookstore in preparation for Commencement, which will be held on June 9.

ing here since 1980, there are a lot of things about this job that are hard, but the actual graduating of students is still wonderful. I still enjoy that immensely."

Elizabeth Ortiz, who is assisting in organizing Commencement says that about 40 percent of students

see *Ceremony* page 2

## "Going Green" Creates Tidal Wave

■ Valley College presented  
with a check, after making  
efforts to clean up school.

BRIAN CARRILLO  
STAFF WRITER

Valley College's effort to promote a more environmentally friendly faculty, campus and student body was rewarded Friday, as the campus received \$157,542 from The Gas Company for the school's efforts in going green.

The money was donated due to the installation of solar panels that generate additional electrical power for the campus. Valley President Sue Carleo was presented with the check.

The Campus Sustainability Group hosted the meeting, as 21 attendees discussed different methods of transportation and the problems in the type of food we consume. Los Angeles Community College District's Sustainability Consultant, Dee Patel, said that for over two years, sustainability series have been offered to students on campus. During this series, students learn how their lifestyle contributes in terms of going green.

"It's a basic way for students to understand the environment not only at the local level, but also



ANA ROSA MURILLO / VALLEY STAR

**FEELING GREEN** - Valley College President Sue Carleo accepts a check for \$157,542 from Luciano Cuevas of The Gas Company Friday, as a rebate for making environmentally sound changes to the College Plant facilities.

globally," she said.

**"I would hope that the money being saved by going green will be used for the advantage of students with Financial Aid, as opposed to putting it to waste."**

- Student  
Nancy Meraz

The most notable "green" project Valley has undertaken is perhaps the Allied Health and Science building. The building was award-

ed first place April 17, by the Green California Leadership for its sustainable features such as a photovoltaic solar array, a storm water retention pond, and other features that save cost and reduce waste.

"Students have new careers to look forward to in everything from alternative energy technologies, clean water initiatives, appropriate development, and sustainability," said Donald Gauthier, president of the Academic Senate and representative for Valley on the District Academic Senate. "Being green involves changing culture, trans-

see *Green* page 2



# 'Security'

continued from page 1

without consent. The law protects the privacy of student education records and applies to all schools that receive funding from the U.S. Department of Education.

"We follow FERPA closely and we watch our employees closely," said Margaret Redmon, senior supervisor of Admissions and Records. "Student employees are given passwords and are able to access some information, but they aren't able to make any changes to that information."

In 2006, Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill, Ca. was involved in a scandal in which student employees of the admissions office accepted payments for changing students' grades. Three students were sentenced to a year in jail for organizing the operation.

That same year, the FBI released a report on identity theft showing that California leads the nation in the growing crime. According to the Javelin Strategy & Research Center, stolen purses, wallets, and physical documents are the most popular source of information for identity thieves.

"Access to our records needs to be limited," said accounting major Chris Peterson. "Somebody's gonna have to have some access but it needs to be limited and monitored."

David Green, associate dean of disabled student programs & services, and Barbara Ralston, the financial aid manager, believe they have taken the necessary steps to secure their offices.

"The credibility of the DSPS rests on confidentiality," says Green. "I'm unaware of any problems in the past, but any such incidents would result in immediate termination."

Ralston says her staff is trained to protect the students' information and that the importance of integrity is re-emphasized throughout the year.

With the advent of the information age, one must also consider the possibility of hackers accessing information from outside the campus. Yefrem Kozin, manager of the college information systems at Valley, says the school is safe online, and a breach in security would most likely come from the school's employees, not from the outside.

He operates under an 80-20 rule, a belief that states 80 percent of crimes committed against any company are performed by somebody in house. However, he believes Valley is safe.

"It doesn't mean that it doesn't exist, but there haven't been any problems, any break-ins to our systems in my 20 years."

# 'Budget'

continued from page 1

English, could hurt students' ability to transfer.

Valley President Sue Carleo said that more reductions could be made in the support services around campus, including tutoring programs and administrative services to ease the financial burden.

"We're spreading people as thin as we can," said Carleo. "There's nothing I would love more than to have the budget we need ... but we're given what we're given."

She also acknowledged the District Budget Committee discussed eliminating all summer classes.

"This would be a district decision," she said. "This would have a direct impact on students filling in courses before they can transfer. Valley College is not inclined to do it ourselves but if we were directed by the board, we would have to do it."

Carleo also responded to the Los Angeles Times report that the CalGrant program could be cut by 77,000 awards per year and to a proposed fee hike to \$60 per unit.

"That would be a double whammy for students," she said. "That means students that already have difficulty with the \$20 fee or also get CalGrants will really be in a bad place."

Carleo and Mayo both believe that the impending budget gutting will affect everyone.

"It's no longer about cutting fat," said Mayo. "What we're [going to do] will be like ordering the best steak on the menu, cutting it in half, and instead of sharing it with the person next to us, we throw it in the trash."

FINALS SCHEDULE								
DAY CLASSES								
MONDAY June 8			TUESDAY June 2			WEDNESDAY June 3		
Day and Date of Final Exam	Time of Exam	Normal Class Schedule	Day and Date of Final Exam	Time of Exam	Normal Class Schedule	Day and Date of Final Exam	Time of Exam	Normal Class Schedule
	6:30 - 8:30 am	6:30 - 7:55 MW 6:45 - 7:55 MTWTh		9:30 - 11:30 am	9:40 - 10:50 MTWTh 9:40 - 11:05 MW 9:40 - 10:55 MWF		8:00 - 10:00 am	8:15 - 9:25 MTWTh 8:00 - 9:25 MW 8:00 - 9:15 MWF
	12:30 - 2:30 pm	1:00 - 2:10 MTWTh 1:00 - 2:25 MW 1:00 - 2:15 MTWTh		12:30 - 2:30 pm	1:00 - 3:00 pm		10:30 am - 12:30 pm	11:20 - 12:30 MTWTh 11:20 - 12:45 MW 11:20 - 12:35 MWF
TUESDAY June 2			WEDNESDAY June 3			THURSDAY June 4		
	6:30 - 8:30 am	6:30 - 7:55 TTh		8:00 - 10:00 am	8:00 - 9:25 TTh 8:00 - 9:15 TThF		10:30 am - 12:30 pm	11:20 - 12:45 TTh 11:20 - 12:35 TThF
	9:30 - 11:30 am	9:40 - 11:05 TTh 9:40 - 10:55 TThF		12:30 - 2:30 pm	1:00 - 3:00 pm		12:30 - 2:30 pm	1:45 - 3:10 TTh 1:45 - 3:00 TThF
EVENING CLASSES								
Classes Meeting at 3 pm or before 5 pm			Classes Meeting at 5 pm or before 6 pm			Classes Meeting At or After 6 pm		
Class Meets	Exam Date	Time	Class Meets	Exam Date	Time	Class Meets	Exam Date	Time
M	M June 8	4 - 6 pm	M	M June 8	4 - 6 pm	M	M June 8	7 - 9 pm
T	T June 2	4 - 6 pm	T	T June 2	4 - 6 pm	T	T June 2	7 - 9 pm
W	W June 3	4 - 6 pm	W	W June 3	4 - 6 pm	W	W June 3	7 - 9 pm
Th	Th June 4	4 - 6 pm	Th	Th June 4	4 - 6 pm	Th	Th June 4	7 - 9 pm
MW	M June 8	4 - 6 pm	MW	W June 3	4 - 6 pm	MW	M June 8	7 - 9 pm
TTh	T June 2	4 - 6 pm	TTh	Th June 4	4 - 6 pm	TTh	T June 2	7 - 9 pm

## HE'S GOT THE POWER



At the 25th Annual Los Angeles Marathon Challenge, Scott Parson, 50, from San Jose, finished 4th in the Wheelchair race in 1:34.59 and averaged 3:37 minutes a mile. The 26.2 mile course attracted nearly 15,000 runners from across the nation. SCOTT MITCHELL, PHOTO EDITOR / VALLEY STAR

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# 'Drop outs'

continued from page 1

helping, some things are out of the hands of the students and college.

"For some students, life gets in the way. It may be a job change, birth or death of a family member, illness of a family member, change of job requirements, etcetera..." Mayo said.

Steps will continue to be made to accommodate all students in all size classes; the key according to Mayo is that the students dropping out are minimal in comparison to those working to challenge themselves.

"For the most part, our students are hardworking individuals with great staying power."

being made to keep as many students in each class as possible, including that of financial aid services and learning, writing, reading, and math labs. Although these departments are

# 'Ceremony'

continued from page 1

"I remember when I started Valley...I lived in a storage room in someone's house across the street and walked to school," said Singh. "Finally, everything has fallen into place and it feels like graduation is a testament to all the things I have done right in these 18 months. My parents are very proud because I am the first one to go to college in America since we emigrated here from India in 1997... My mother has waited for this for a very long time and I am happy that she will be here to see the fruition of her dreams."

The school advises that students can purchase their caps, gowns and tassels from the bookstore for \$30, with honors students able to buy gold cords for \$11. Guests of graduates can park in lots D, E, F, and G and should be seated in Monarch Stadium by 4.30 p.m. The ceremony is expected to end at 6.30 p.m.

who petition for graduation actually walk in the ceremony. Rahul Singh is one student who will be participating in Commencement, not only as a candidate for graduation, but also as a student speaker. Singh will be transferring to UCLA in the fall.

# 'Green'

continued from page 1

friendly buildings.

Valley students hope that the benefits of having an environmentally friendly goal will go back into Valley.

"I would hope that the money being saved by going green, will be used for the advantage of the students with financial aid, as opposed to putting it to waste," said student Nancy Meraz.

forming how we do things with an eye towards the future of our planet."

Gauthier also stated that to reduce cost in the long run, co-operation of everyone on campus would be needed, and that going green may open doors for new faculty, and will give us cleaner, more eco-

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## Out With The 'In' Word On Campus

■ Those who use this controversial word need to think before they speak.

H. GORE  
SPORTS EDITOR

There's a word - usually spoken by African-American students - that can be heard all over Valley College. "What's up nigga?", "I'm saying my nigga," and "Damn nigga!" are a few of the common phrases used by students that feature the controversial N-word.

I expect (and don't mind) hearing the word "nigga" when I'm listening to hip-hop or watching a Chris Rock performance. I can't stand to hear it at Valley. There are too many people that can't understand a black person's reason for using the N-word, and any foul language sounds ignorant when blurted out at a place of higher learning.

Don't get me wrong, I say it. I have friends that say it. I've heard my 85-year-old grandma say it. We've all said it, but there's a time and place for everything. At home, in your car, or talking privately with a friend are acceptable places to speak however you want. The college bookstore, cafeteria, and main walkway are not.

"We shouldn't be showing out in front of other people. It makes us all look bad," said freshman Rahim Tahjuddin. "If you're with your friends, all black students, it's all right. But if you're in front of other people it makes us look stupid."

The word nigger is derived from "niger", the Latin term for black, and its racist history can be traced back to the 17th century. Four hundred years later the word can be used to express hate or love.

The use of the N-word is a hot-button topic in the African-American community. It has been debated everywhere from college campuses to barbershops. The elders don't want the

word used in any sense, the Gen-Xers are cool with it, and those born in 1980 or later have an even more lax view of the word. Some, such as Valley freshman George Taylor, blame hip-hop for "nigga's" popularity and for non-blacks becoming comfortable using the word.

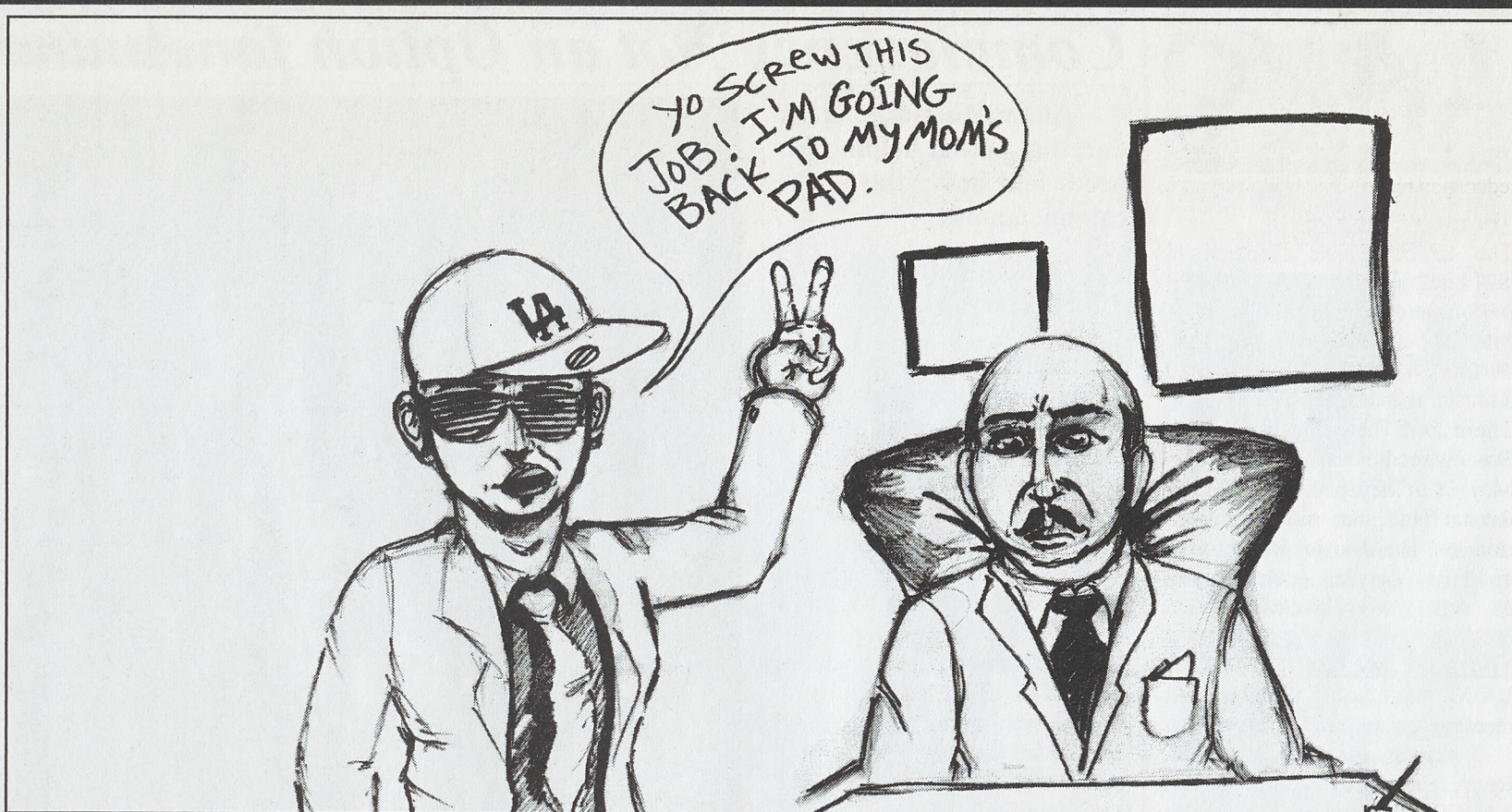
"When you come to school and you hear non-blacks use it, we can't say much about it because we use it all the damn time," said Taylor. "The rappers use it, and they listen to it. As long as they're not calling me a nigg-ER I really don't have a problem with it."

Taylor's view reflects a mindset held by many young African-Americans. Nowadays, whites, Latinos, and Asians can be heard calling one another nigga or using the word around their black friends. Sophomore psychology major Lauren Brown believes only African-Americans should use the word, but with discretion.

"If you're black you can say it. If you're not you can't say it," said Brown. "But I don't think it should be used in public, yelled across a room in a room full of people that might not understand."

While I'm simply calling for a cease and desist of any form of the N-word on campus, the NAACP wants to get rid of the word altogether. In July 2007, the organization held a funeral and buried the word in a casket. Dr. Cornel West, who serves as the Class of 1943 university professor at Princeton University, makes an excellent case for getting rid of the word in an interview with Christian Century magazine.

"You see, we need a renaissance of self-respect, a renewal of self-regard. And the term itself has been associated with such abuse," West says. "It associates black people with being inferior, subhuman and subordinate. So we ought to have a moratorium on the term. We ought not to use the term at all."



EDUARDO HERRERA / VALLEY STAR

## Understanding Generation Why

■ Generation Y has been spoiled and it shows in what we feel we deserve.

JOE LAFLEUR  
OPINION EDITOR

Were you born between 1977 and 1994? Do you feel the need to express your emotions about everything, regardless of whether the people around you want to hear? Do you pride yourself on your ability to check your emails on your BlackBerry while you twitter on your iPhone and text on your Sidekick? Do you preach politics and a need for change yet do nothing about it, aside from making half-baked plans with your friends over a triple-shot decaf vanilla iced latte that costs you \$9?

You're not alone. There are roughly 76 million people, according to Time.com, who do and feel

the same. You, or should I say we, are "Generation Y."

Also referred to as "Millennials" or "Echo Boomers," we are the largest generation since Baby Boomers and what makes us so extraordinary is one simple fact - we think we're special. That's right my fellow Millennials, your mommy told you so, and you believed it. But who could blame you? You were raised during a time when overindulgent parents felt that healthy competition was bad and that children needed to learn how to express their feelings rather than act on them. Kids of our generation are probably used to hearing, "Yes, the other team did score 15 more runs than your team, but you didn't lose because we're all winners. Now hold your 5th place trophy high and tell mommy how that makes you feel!"

There was no such thing as

tough love when we were raised. Who of us ever heard "Walk it off," or "Yes, you did lose. Now stop crying about it?" We had everything we ever needed and all we had to do was "ask nicely."

Our parents were "late baby boomers," or members of "Generation X." You know, that group of "old" people who actually had to work for what they wanted. Because of this, they wanted us, their children, to be better off than they were. So they gave us what we wanted instead of showing us how to get it ourselves. For those who don't believe this, nas-recruitment.com reported that one in nine high schoolers has a credit card co-signed by their parents.

Now, this seemingly harmless blunder by our parents is affecting the way we view employment. Instead of adapting to a job, we want the job to adapt to us. "Don't like the hours? We'll change them

for you. Don't like the dress code? I'll rethink the wardrobe. Not inspired enough to work? Let us help you find the meaning behind it all." To us, these are reasonable requests and factors that we consider when looking for a job.

So after college, once you've been fired from your internship at that advertising company you thought was the perfect fit for not adhering to the formal dress code, know that you can always come home and move back in with your parents. Don't worry about finding another job immediately either because you're still mommy's special trooper. And remember, maybe if you complain enough, ask nicely and say "thank you" to the nice man in a suit, he may just give you that dream job of yours - working for a start-up dot-com company with as many coffee breaks as your heart desires.

### CAMPUS VIEW:

Photos by Klara Miller, Chief Photographer / Valley Star



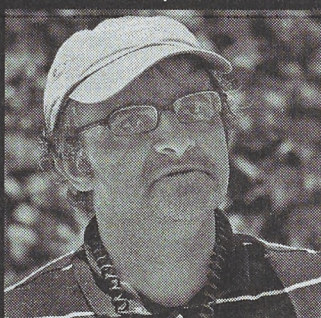
"There's too much pollution on the ground. I think that they should do something to clean it up."

- Luke Bryant  
psychology



"I really think they should make it so that, if you're on financial aid, the parking permits are half price."

- Jennifer Sasiak  
psychology



"I think that they should open the cafeteria on Fridays and also, I think they should put more computers in the library."

- Jack Ravid  
communications



"I want there to be more activities, more student involvement and I also think they should promote club day more."

- Rebecca Hernandez  
psychology

What would you like to see the ASU accomplish next semester?

## Controversy over Representation: The ASU Legacy

■ The 2008-2009 ASU leaves behind a wake of controversy.

ROBERT R. KING  
STAFF WRITER

Each year at Valley College, members of the Associated Student Union take office to represent the students' best interests. They hold club days and events on campus and supposedly voice student views with the administration, district, and state. This year's group did what they felt best for the students and school, but visibly created more controversy than anything.

Even though the board helped clubs to sell food to raise funds during club day and earned praise for a few banquets this spring, they also created several contentious issues that had students talking more than the rest of their work.

First, they sent students to Sacramento with the stated pur-

pose of supporting the legislature for not cutting community colleges' budget too badly, completely ignoring the students who did not agree.

Additionally, the legislature, at that point, had passed the responsibility off to voters in the form of six ballot referendums, which all failed and stand to cause a gigantic budget cut to K-14 education.

Second, ASU President Josh Wible claims he opened a new era of "accountable governance" and exposed hypocritical practices within Valley's administration. He used the proposed smoking ban as a talking point.

"How can [the administration] expect students to follow the smoking rules when we have a picture of one of the [administrators] smoking outside of a designated area?" said Wible.

However, he failed to mention the fact he fired Jesse Richardson for seeking publication of his opinion while nothing public was done when Steven Ruiz admitted to stealing from the school cafeteria,

which negates any credibility Wible may have had.

Starting today, the ASU is holding a special referendum for students to vote to raise their optional ASU fees from \$7 to \$10. Even though students can elect to not pay the fee, it does seem a bit short sighted to even consider asking people to shell out more of their hard earned money.

This especially takes on more meaning if the state legislature acts on several requests to raise enrollment fees and cut financial aid.

To add to the fire, the board ruled last week that several students who signed up for, but were unable to attend, the rally in Sacramento will be held responsible for their unused plane tickets. Even though the board cut the monetary amount in half for the students in question, to hold someone responsible for a plane ticket that was already purchased whether or not the spot was claimed is ludicrous and ill conceived.

In addition to the arguments they have caused, the board also did not accomplish several tasks. They did not make the effort to hold the annual Black History month celebration; the board created two \$250 Black History Scholarships, and received a total of four applications. Furthermore, instead of looking for an alternative option, they did not hold the annual Arts Fair because of "insurance issues," according to Wible.

Officials around campus have said an ASU board is usually judged on how few problems they cause and if they can enact something students can benefit from in the future. Aside from increased club activity and a thoughtfully planned budget for next year, this board will leave behind memories of controversy. With that in mind, students should ask themselves if the ASU deserves more money as a legacy for their hard work and hope the new board can work with, not against, their peers.

## Inconsideration Still Alive!

LAUREN LEES  
ONLINE EDITOR

It's that time of the semester, when every spare second between classes are spent stuffing as much information as possible into my brain. I seek the Fireside Room to indulge in quiet solitude and absorb as much information as possible.

Walking into the still room, I find an empty table to comfortably rest myself and my textbook. Around me sit four other students immersed in their own studies, taking notes, reading books, and flitting through three by five note cards.

This is our haven, until the door flies open, and two women walk in. Disturbed but not perturbed, I think nothing of their presence at first. They settle themselves, unzipping backpacks and crunching through chips. I notice the fast paced foreign language flying from their mouths as the seconds draw on and my concentration starts to break. I become transfixed on their every syllable, listening out for words I know while my eyes continue in vain to scan through my textbook.

I give them a lingering look - the "look" - desperate to catch just one eye, and mentally force them to cease any and all talking, but it falls limp. I look over at the other quiet ones, making contact and exchanging my annoyance through rolling eyes, and deep sighs.

I toy with the gumption to politely ask these two to quiet down, when the door opens again. Two more walk in and the sequence begins yet again,

except their language of choice is English.

Through this verbal orchestra, any nerves I had to address the first felons fades. In frustration I stare down my book, watching the words blur into one another, fading into black splotches against a white backdrop. Desperately I look around at my newfound comrades seeking unity and strength to combat this vocal tirade. But, my eyesight falls on despair, as books are closed and shoved into backpacks. Solemnly, they each walk out, each footstep yelling out in anguish of defeat.

I too close my book with the lost hope of achieving any reading. Walking out, I give the intruders another glance as they continue talking, unaware of the perfect vacuum they destroyed.

Familiar? It is for forensic psychology major Cheyenne Brandon, who's no stranger to raucous students lurking in study rooms and libraries.

"Its annoying, irritating, you're trying to get work done and then people are distracting you," he said. "And then I have to move, and stop everything that I'm doing and find another place to go."

As I walk out thinking of where I can go, either the library or a bench outside, I'm struck with the unfortunate insight that no matter where I go, someone will come. They'll be on their phone or with their friends. They'll talk loudly, laugh unnecessarily hard, or have their iPod at full blast. All I can do is pray that once I transfer to a UC, the students there will have learned how to shut up.

### TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Send letters to the editor to thevalleystar@yahoo.com. Letters must be limited to 300 words and can be edited for publication. A full name and contact information must be supplied in order to be printed. Letters must be received by Thursday to be included in the next edition.



LAVC  
EVENTS**Thursday, May 28**

The LAVC Music Department will hold an array of free musical performances during the week of May 24-30. There will be LAVC Performance Workshops at 11:20 a.m. in the Music Recital Hall. There will also be an LAVC Broadway Showcase on Thursday, May 28 at 3:30 p.m. in the Music Recital Hall. For more information on the Music Department and its concert performances, visit [www.lavc.edu/music/](http://www.lavc.edu/music/).

**Thursday, May 28**

LAVC will hold a town hall meeting on renewable energy at 1:30 p.m. in the Fireside Room. Representatives from Build LACCD will be on hand to discuss the technologies, performance criteria/limits, and the educational aspects of the campus energy plan. For more information, contact Don Gauthier at (818) 778-5514.

**Deadline: June 1**

LAVC like to recognize our graduating students who will be transferring to four-year colleges and universities this Fall on the college's electronic marquee. If you'd like to share where you're transferring to, please send an email with your name, the school you are going to, and your student ID number to [fongjc@lavc.edu](mailto:fongjc@lavc.edu) by June 1.

**Tuesday, June 9**

The 2009 Commencement Ceremony will be held on Tuesday, June 9 at 5 p.m. in Monarch Stadium. For more information regarding Commencement 2009, contact Elizabeth Ortiz at (818) 947-2361.

## Complacency Not an Option for Anand "Andy" Ramachandran

■ Anand Ramachandran does not settle, helping his peers and achieving all he can on campus.

LUCAS THOMPSON  
STAFF WRITER

If you're looking to bump into Valley College student Anand "Andy" Ramachandran, chances are you will find him editing one of his latest flicks or giving guidance to fellow students in the Learning and Writing centers.

Raised in Louisiana, Ramachandran inadvertently always had an underlying passion for film and the entertainment business.

"Movies didn't really register for me in a material sense until Star Wars," he said.

Ramachandran said that his father dragged him to see the first "Star Wars" movie, leading him to love the saga, saying, "He had no idea what kind of worms he opened."

Suppressing his affection for movies, Ramachandran went on to receive his bachelor's degree from Colorado University with a major in English. Continuing his journey, Andy bounced around jobs, including information technology and state government, making "good money," but anxious for something else.

"I always wanted to study film and be in the film business... They say you gotta go to the mountain, you gotta go to the source."

That he did, and in 2005 Ramachandran picked up and moved out to California.

In 2006, he signed up for his first of many classes at Valley, including history of cinema and film aesthetics with Joseph Daccurso.



SAMUEL OKSNER / VALLEY STAR

**STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE** - Valley College student Andy Ramachandran, takes a break in the media arts film studio from his up to 25 hours a week assisting his fellow students in both the Learning and Writing Centers. Ramachandran will graduate from Valley this December with his associate degree.

"I think he has the respect of the students...[and] the students are appreciative," said Daccurso.

Since the first classes with his now mentor Daccurso, Ramachandran strived to be further involved in the media arts program by tutoring cinema students with any help or further explanations they may need. Becoming the professor's tutoring assistant, Ramachandran expresses only the highest regard for Professor Daccurso.

"That model really resonates with me," Ramachandran says of Daccurso's film to teaching career.

"I feel like him and I have kind of had these journeyman phases...it's something to aspire to."

**"I think he has the respect of the students... [And] the students are appreciative."**

- Valley Film Professor  
Joseph Daccurso

Completing six semesters here at Valley, Ramachandran has demonstrated his talents. For five of six semesters, he has earned

a place on the honors list, was elected as the Vice President of Tau Alpha Epsilon in spring 2008, was announced as President of the media arts student committee in 2007, and has spent a majority of his days in the Writing Center helping students improve their writing and study skills.

Ramachandran plans to graduate with his associate degree from Valley in December 2009, with a minor in screenwriting and directing. But, his education will not end here.

"It's been a positive experience...There's a sense of commu-

nity [here]," Ramachandran says of Valley. "It's been the difference between the rubber starting to meet the road, and me sitting in Louisiana...I can [now] more confidently apply to a Masters program."

He has a distinct love for film, education, and above all helping those who surround him. Ramachandran has taken what most merely try to survive and turned it not only into a passion but a place of endless opportunity.

"I'm enjoying what I'm doing... what else can anyone ask for?"

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## Summer Flicks to Hit

ASTRID SEIPELT  
MANAGING EDITOR

The heat of summer is fast approaching, and all Angelinos know that the temperatures that scorch Southern California are something best avoided. In the face of this, there is nothing more tempting than lounging at the movies and taking in a blockbuster. This summer, there are quite a few gems that are worth your \$13.

Two years after the release of "Transformers," Shia LaBeouf and Megan Fox are back together June 24 in "Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen." Sam Witwicky (LaBeouf) is off to college, but his peace and quiet doesn't last, with Transformer drama sending him off to explore where Transformers really came from (could it really be Earth?). With a much bigger budget than its predecessor, expect to see more Autobots and Decepticons fighting it out, as well as director Michael Bay's favorite movie effects — explosions and loud noises.

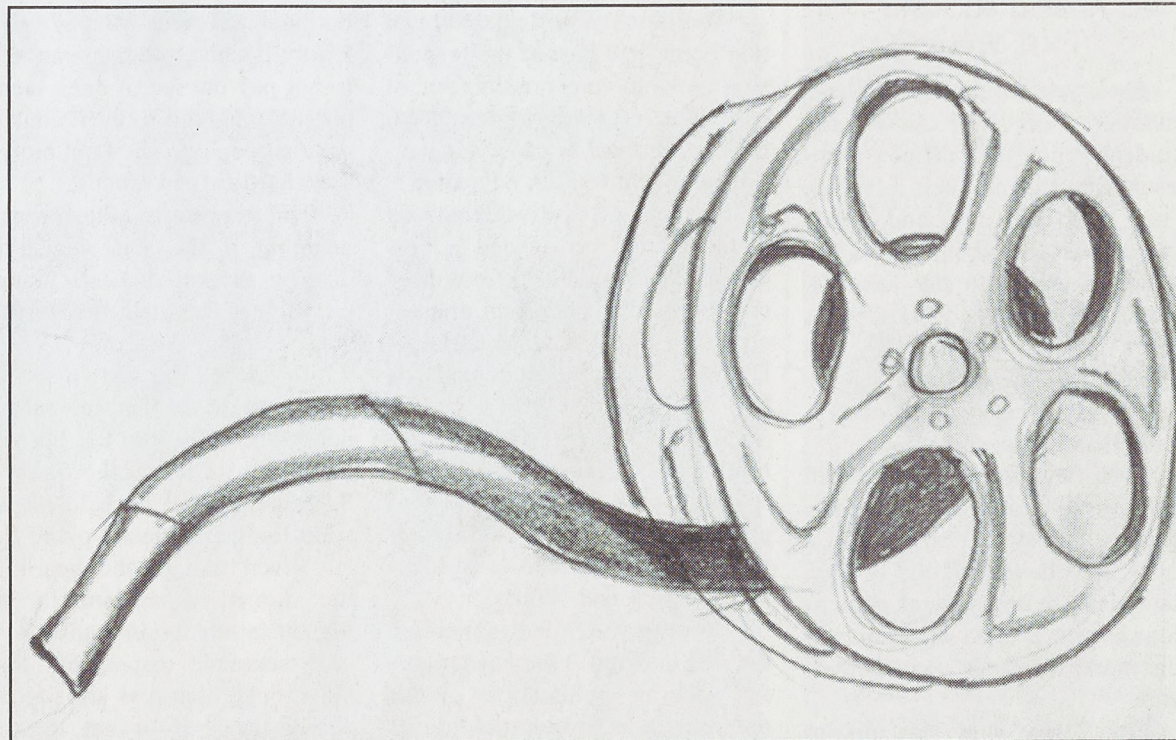
Fantasy stories are the best kind of escape from the heat, and the release of "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" on July 17 is timed perfectly to do so. Harry, Ron and Hermione begin their sixth year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, with war brewing in the Wizarding world. "Half Blood Prince" is a decidedly darker chapter in young Harry's life, with death and despair unavoidable the closer to the credits you get. One thing fans

will be aware of is how much the film deviates from the book (and how much Quidditch is featured), but no matter how much it strays from the original tale, Potter will work his magic on you.

Quentin Tarantino is back after the disappointment of "Grindhouse" with the Aug. 21 release of "Inglourious Basterds," a look at the effort of Jewish-American soldiers to instill fear in the Third Reich with brutal murders. Brad Pitt stars as Aldo Raine, the head "Basterd" charged to roam across Nazi-occupied France, with Eli Roth in a supporting role. Tarantino spent almost a decade working on this script, according to [IMDb.com](http://IMDb.com). Let's hope it lives up to the likes of "Kill Bill" and "Pulp Fiction."

It may be 2009, but it can't hurt to take a step back to "Year One," set to be released June 19. Michael Cera and Jack Black team up as hunter-gatherers who are banished from their village, due to their inevitable hi-jinks. Though they are both funny men in their own right, go in knowing that this could just end up as an hour and a half of Tenacious D and "Superbad" combined. But, even if it is, it can't be that bad to laugh at a few silly jokes and eat some popcorn.

Summer is always littered with movies, both good and bad. It can be a tough decision, divining what films are worth your hard-earned cash, but the next few months look like any flick is a good investment.



EDUARDO HERRERA/VALLEY STAR



## MOVIE REVIEW

### This Year's Model

JOSH SPENCE  
STAFF WRITER

The incredibly reverent "Terminator: Salvation" not only combines the action expected for any Terminator or McG film, but adds the right amount of story that receives praise from critics, and adulation from fans.

Using the three major storylines in the Terminator universe, McG sets "Salvation" in the dystopian future of 2018 where "Judgment Day" has come and John Connor (Christian Bale) is ready to lead the effort against the machines. The only problem is that the leaders of the resistance are having trouble deciding if he is the prophetic leader ready to take charge, a hoax, or worse. The audience is also reintroduced to character Kyle Reese (From the first Terminator) along with the addition of Marcus Wright, an ex-convict who learns how to regain his humanity after no longer having it inherently within him.

What immediately stands out about the story is the reference to characters, events, and dialogue of the previous three films, doing away any notion that this is a reimagining. The referencing gives the film immediate credibility with fans by not trying to distance itself from the

franchise's previous efforts, which are sci-fi masterpieces save for "Rise of the Machines." This also allows for non stop action, given there isn't an hour of backstory to explain. It successfully answers every "What if..." or "How did..." question any may ask about the Terminator mythology in the past 25 years.

All this could not be done without superb acting. Bale comes as the most credible action star of our generation and he plays the part of John Connor well enough that you forget he's Bruce Wayne for two hours. While he's not on screen as much as you'd expect, that's okay given Kyle Reese (Anton Yelchin) and Marcus Wright (newcomer Sam Worthington) are such interesting

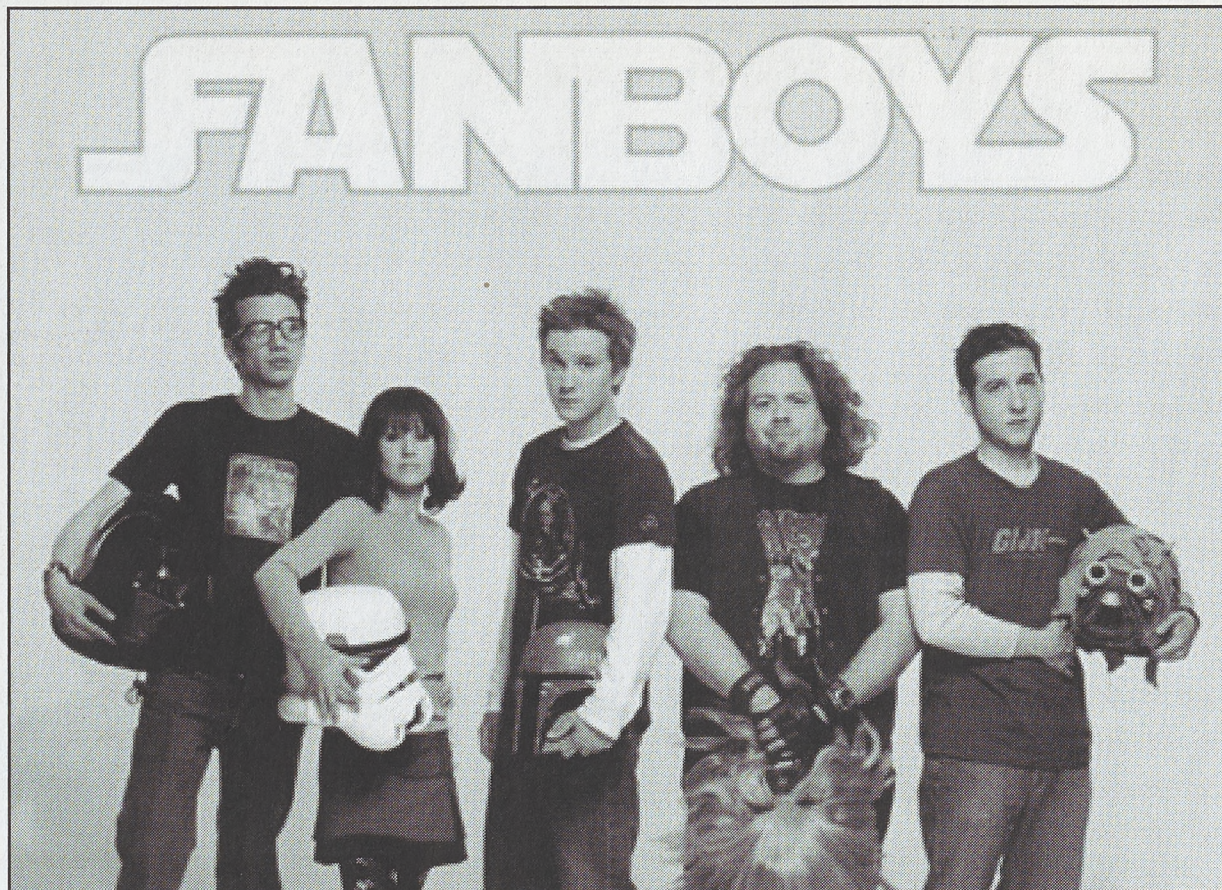
characters.

Yelchin's portrayal of Reese gives the character considerable depth from the first film and sets the tone, despite all hell breaking loose, humans have the heart and emotion to fight back. It's interesting that despite "Salvation" being such a huge action film, it's Yelchin's subtleties that almost speak louder than Bale or Worthington who are going full throttle.

Director McG should take solace in the fact that he has created a masterpiece worthy of the film's predecessor and that its ultimate accomplishment is that it adds to the legacy of Terminator, not just banking off its past.



## DVD REVIEW



### "Star Wars" Spoof Calls All Nerds

IVAN ZUNIGA  
STAFF WRITER

Four friends and an adventure of a lifetime to Skywalker Ranch is all you can ask for in a comedy about nerds making fools out of themselves. The DVD release of "Fanboys" offers many great laughs for anyone who enjoys spoofing the "Star Wars" films.

Like any other "Star Wars" film the movie opens with introductions scrolling across the screen, describing where the film takes place and the main basis of the film. This movie has a mix of story lines from movies such as "Superbad" or "Road Trip" that have the same theme, as you're sure to laugh at the jokes about Star Trek fans and trivial pur-

suits on their individual Star Wars knowledge.

Sam Huntington ("Not Another Teen Movie"), Christopher Marquette ("The Girl Next Door"), Dan Fogler ("Balls of Fury") and Jay Baruchel ("Knocked Up") play the group of friends set for a one of a kind quest. The friends, who still aren't over their obsession with "Star Wars" decide to go on a road trip to George Lucas's Skywalker Ranch to steal a rough copy of the "Star Wars Episode I—The Phantom Menace" before its release, bringing them all together for one last epic trip.

As they embark on their journey to Skywalker Ranch they meet many challenges on their way, from escaping the police with their high-powered van to making

a quick stop in Las Vegas for guidance on their lofty quest. But, all these distractions don't stop them from getting to their destination.

"Fanboys" has been the victim of postponement twice, as a lack of funding prevented it's completion and planned August 17, 2007 release. Eventually, director Kyle Newman was given more funding for the film and added more scenes, letting the film make it to the silver screen.

Perfect for any "Star Wars" fan, "Fanboys" is about relating with its witty tales of cross-country encounters and battles. Not set in a galaxy far, far away, "Fanboys" is one DVD you can laugh at the jokes you may not get, but leave with a little bit more knowledge about the "Star Wars" saga.

## UPCOMING RELEASES

CD

PICKS OF THE WEEK:



FRANZ  
FERDINAND  
BLOOD

OTHER RELEASES:

Gala, *Tough Love*  
Phoenix, *Wolfgang Amadeus Phoenix*  
Marilyn Manson, *The High End Of Low*

FILM

PICKS OF THE WEEK:



UP

UPCOMING RELEASES:

Drag Me To Hell  
Departure  
What Goes Up

DVD

PICKS OF THE WEEK:



HE'S JUST NOT  
THAT INTO YOU

OTHER RELEASES:

Defiance  
Revolutionary Road  
Baby on Board

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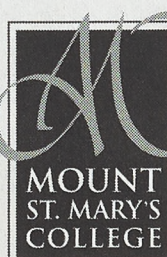
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## Harm Turns to Help for Mestas

■Valley College Athletic Trainer Dennis Mestas has turned a horrific teenage injury into a drive to help the student athletes on campus, and above all, lead a happy life.

SARAH KNOWLES  
NEWS EDITOR

An injury can be devastating for an athlete; it can be the end of a career or dream, and can crush a bright future. However, for Valley College Athletic Trainer Dennis Mestas, a dirt biking accident at the age of 19 changed his life – for the better.

"I couldn't walk for 3 months," said 40-something Mestas, who has just finished attending to one of Valley's athletes, one of his many jobs throughout the day.

The accident retired him from football and forced him to end his time at the University of California Los Angeles. While many would presume that the Los Angeles native would regret the accident that cost him his football career, an upbeat Mestas said he would only change one thing.

"If I could do it all again, I would've never played football."

The injury propelled his future down a different path and made way for his career and his loves - his wife and tennis.

An avid traveler, Mestas studied in Las Vegas, gaining his bachelor's degree in education with emphasis on athletic training in 1985, before heading to Ohio on a \$20,000 scholarship to earn a one-year master's degree in physical education, with emphasis again on athletic training. Las Vegas was a significant point in Mestas' life – it was where he discovered a profound passion for tennis; something that remains to this day.

"Tennis is my love," Mestas smiles, the sunny spring sky

beaming upon his tanned skin as he sits outside the athletic training building on campus, where he spends much of his time.

"I told my wife, if I die on a tennis court, you know I died the happiest. If the weather doesn't break you down, then I will. Oh my god, I love tennis."

Ranked in the top 200 tennis players age 45 and over, he regularly trains for tournaments, one which is approaching in the next couple of weeks. As a member of the United States Tennis Association, Mestas takes his sport seriously, maintaining honor for the sport he calls a "man against man war."

**"I told my wife, if I die on a tennis court, you know I died happy. If the weather doesn't break you down, then I will. Oh my god, I love tennis."**

- Athletic Trainer  
Dennis Mestas

His love for tennis is perhaps only outshone by the love for his wife, Kim. The pair became school friends and remained in contact during Mestas' time away from the West Coast. The pair met up again when he returned home and have now been married for 17 years.

Fellow athletic trainer and long time friend of Mestas, Angelo Cimity, informed Mestas about the job opening at Valley last summer; Mestas nicknamed Cimity 'The Godfather,' after

telling him about the job offer "he could not refuse."

"He was the first one I thought of. I didn't know if he was happy [and] what the situation was at West [Los Angeles College]"

Although Mestas remembers the sadness he suffered during his first and only year at UCLA, he will be forever grateful for those moments that guided him in a new direction. The change gave him the career he adores, along with his childhood sweetheart and a lifestyle he does not want to alter. Of course, his passion for one sport cements the contentment he has with his life and loves.

"When I go home today, I'm gonna play tennis."



SAMUAL OKSNER / VALLEY STAR

**BUILT TO CARE-** Valley College Athletic Trainer Dennis Mestas has a passion for many things, including helping the athletes on campus and playing a mean game of tennis. The "40-something" Mestas is a top-ranked player in the sport.

## No Steroid Testing For Junior College Athletes

H. GORE  
SPORTS EDITOR

Professional sports and the National Collegiate Athletic Association are increasing their efforts to eliminate performance-enhancing drug use amongst their participants. The NFL, NBA, NHL, and MLB have tiered-suspension plans for multiple offenders. The NCAA hands out year long suspensions for those that violate the association's drug policy.

With the professional and collegiate ranks trying to clean up their sports, and the known health risk associated with steroids, one has to wonder why there is no testing for performance-enhancing drugs on the community-college level.

"It is a financial issue," said Carlyle Carter, president and CEO of the California Community College Athletic Association. "We don't want people to think we don't have a concern over the health of student-athletes, but we're not a for-profit organization and with the state of the

budget crisis we can't afford to test."

The NCAA drug tests are administered by the Missouri-based company Drug Free Sport. Owner Frank Uryasz told ESPN.com the costs for the tests range from \$75-\$100 an exam, depending on how many substances the athlete is tested for.

NCAA athletes are subject to year-round random tests that include students being sought at home during the summer break. They are given no more than a 48-hour notice prior to providing a urine sample. According to the NCAA, these tests result in one to two percent of student-athletes proving positive for banned substances every year.

Valley College sophomore wide receiver Joel Clements doesn't feel steroids are a problem for the football team, but thinks that all athletes should be tested.

"I've never seen anybody or heard of anybody I've played with using steroids," said Clements. "They need to test for it though because it gives guys an unfair advantage and

that's not right."

Athletes want to compete on a level playing field so their opposition to performance-enhancers is understandable. The bigger concern is the health risks that are associated with steroid use. Common side-effects include testicular shrinkage and breast growth in men, baldness, acne, high blood pressure, liver damage, and changes to the left ventricle of the heart.

A 2007 National Institute on Drug Abuse study revealed that 0.8 percent of 8th graders, 1.1 percent of 10th graders, and 1.4 percent of 12th graders had used anabolic steroids within a year of the study. Many of those surveyed were not participating in athletics.

"It's important to note that it's not just the athletes using steroids," said Athletic Department Chair Gary Honjio. "There are guys in my classes, guys in the weightlifting classes that you know are using something so we pull them to the side and try to explain to them the dangers of using steroids."

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